

AFICG

ROUTINE

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BT

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 208764

E.O. 12356: DECL:OADR

TAGS: PREL. AF, EG

SUBJECT: BRIEFING THE EGYPTIANS ON AFGHANISTAN

REF. CAIRO 15537

1. CONFIDENTIAL -- ENTIRE TEXT

2. EMBASSY SHOULD ASSURE GOE THAT THERE HAVE BEEN NO RECENT DEVELOPMENTS TO WARRANT ANY LESSENING OF THE PRESSURE ON THE SOVIETS/DRA TO NEGOTIATE A VIABLE POLITICAL SETTLEMENT. ANY DIMINUTION OF PRESSURE -- PERCEIVED OR REAL -- COULD PROVIDE THEM WITH MORE EXCUSES TO AVOID THE HARD DECISIONS WHICH MUST PRECEDE SOVIET TROOP WITHDRAWAL. EMBASSY SHOULD FEEL FREE TO DRAW ON MATERIAL IN PARA THREE BELOW IN ITS NEXT EXCHANGE WITH THE GOE ON AFGHANISTAN.

3. AFGHANISTAN -- CURRENT SITUATION

THE WAR: HEAVY FIGHTING CONTINUES, ESPECIALLY NEAR THE PAKISTAN BORDER, WHERE THE RESISTANCE HAVE BEEN REPORTED

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AN ABILITY TO FIGHT THE SOVIETS TO A STANDSTILL IN RELATIVELY LARGE-SCALE CONVENTIONAL COMBAT. DURING RECENT FIGHTING AT ALI KHEYL AND KANDAHAR, THE

SOVIETS/DRA SUFFERED SIGNIFICANT CASUALTIES AND MATERIEL LOSSES IN AN UNSUCCESSFUL ATTEMPT TO DISRUPT RESISTANCE LOC'S. RESISTANCE PRESSURE AROUND KABUL REMAINS STEADY. RECENT ENGAGEMENTS HAVE ALSO UNDERScoreD THE HIGH STATE OF RESISTANCE MORALE, AN ENHANCED LEVEL OF BATTLEFIELD COORDINATION BETWEEN GROUPS FROM DIFFERENT PARTIES, AND THE CONTINUING HEMORRHAGE OF THE ALREADY WEAKENED DRA ARMED FORCES. ENHANCED RESISTANCE ANTI-AIRCRAFT CAPABILITIES HAVE LED TO INCREASED SOVIET/DRA AIR LOSSES AND TO A LESSENING IN THE OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF COMMUNIST AIRPOWER. DESPITE NAJIB'S ANNOUNCED EXTENSION OF THE SIX-MONTH CEASEFIRE LAUNCHED IN JANUARY, FURTHER HEAVY FIGHTING IS LIKELY THROUGHOUT THE SUMMER.

UN EFFORTS: THE LAST GENEVA ROUND CONCLUDED MARCH 9 WITH A NARROWING OF DIFFERENCES OVER THE TROOP WITHDRAWAL ISSUE: THE DRA NOW OFFERS 18 MONTHS, THE GOP 7. THE SOVIETS/DRA HAVE SUCCESSFULLY SHIFTED THE FOCUS OF NEGOTIATING EFFORTS FROM THE TROOP WITHDRAWAL TIMETABLE TO NATIONAL RECONCILIATION, WHERE THE SOVIET POSITION DIFFERS GREATLY FROM THE GOP'S. ALTHOUGH THE GOP HAD AGREED TO RECEIVE CORDOVEZ IN JULY, THE DRA DECLINED, THEREBY FORCING HIM TO CANCEL HIS PLANS FOR A MID-SUMMER VISIT TO THE REGION. UNHRC RAPPORTEUR ERMACORA'S FIRST VISIT TO KABUL IS SET FOR JULY 29 - AUGUST 8.

DRA: NAJIB'S "NATIONAL RECONCILIATION" CAMPAIGN HAS MADE FEW GAINS: HIS RECENT CALL FOR CONTACTS WITH FORMER MONARCHIST LEADERS AND ALLUSION TO A LEADERSHIP ROLE FOR EX-KING ZAHIR IN A COALITION GOVERNMENT MAY BE INTENDED TO OVERCOME THE LUKEWARM RESPONSE TO HIS EFFORTS, WHILE SEEKING TO DEEPEN THE DIVISIONS IN THE ALLIANCE. INTRA-PARTY FACTIONALISM CONTINUES AND WILL LIKELY INTENSIFY WITH THE JUNE REMOVAL FROM THE POLITBURO OF KARNAL SUPPORTER, ANAHITA RATEDZAD. IN THE MEANTIME, THE KABUL REGIME HAS BEEN WORKING HARD TO EXPAND AND CONSOLIDATE DIPLOMATIC TIES WITH OTHER COUNTRIES. RECENT SUCCESSES INCLUDE ZIMBABWE, CYPRUS, AND POSSIBLY AUSTRIA.

SOVIET INTENTIONS: MOSCOW HAS YET TO MAKE THE DIFFICULT DECISION TO WITHDRAW ITS TROOPS, WITHOUT BEING SURE IT WILL LEAVE A SECURE, PRO-SOVIET REGIME IN POWER. RECENT STATEMENTS FROM MOSCOW ABOUT A POSSIBLE ROLE FOR EX-KING ZAHIR HAVE BEEN ACCOMPANIED BY A STEPPED-UP CAMPAIGN OF CROSS-BORDER AIR/ARTILLERY ATTACKS, TERRORISM AND SUBVERSION DESIGNED TO FORCE PAKISTAN INTO MAKING SUBSTANTIAL CONCESSIONS. ZAHIR HAS PUBLICLY REJECTED SOVIET OVERTURES.

GOP REACTION: MOST PAKISTANIS APPEAR TO BACK ZIA'S

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